

THE INTERCHANGE

APRIL, 1987

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS EMPLOYEE'S NEWSLETTER

THUMBS UP FOR HIGHWAY PROGRAM

Months of hard work paid off in February as a bill to fund the highway Reconstruction Trust Fund (RTF) program received final legislative approval and was signed by the Governor. For both the department and for the State of Montana, it was a major piece of legislation. It ensures an ambitious, 10-year program to rebuild primary roads can be completed.

Approximately 1000 jobs in the construction industry and literally hundreds of jobs in the highway department were tied to the bill. By acting quickly, the loss of jobs and loss of the 1987 construction season was averted. Plans are proceeding to sell additional revenue bonds and start letting projects to contract.

The bill, HB 136, was sponsored by Rep. Jerry Driscoll, D-Billings. It raised gas and diesel fuel taxes by 3¢ per gallon and earmarked the revenue for highway repairs.

The bill passed by a two-thirds majority with bipartisan support during a legislative session marked by partisan disputes. In that regard, early passage of the bill was remarkable. A diverse group came together to push the measure, including labor unions, contractors and trade groups.

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Most state legislatures meeting in 1987 are considering motor fuel tax increases. Several proposals, if approved, would raise their taxes higher than Montana's. Still, the "highest tax in the nation" argument was often used to oppose the measure.

Proponents argued Montana's fuel tax is unlike many states' because it makes up the bulk of the highway budget. They also argued Montana has a great deal of catching up to do to get our roads in shape.

Director Gary Wicks noted it took "a lot of work by a lot of people" to pass the measure and praised the legislators who voted for the fuel tax increase, calling it "an act of courage."

The other major legislation affecting the department, the '88-'89 budget, was still proceeding through the legislature in relatively good condition. With about 20 legislative days remaining, Executive Staff Assistant Bill Gosnell expressed optimism. He was quick to point out, however, "it ain't over 'til it's over."

That quip took on added meaning late in March when federal highway funding was approved in a "squeaker" of monumental proportions.

It couldn't have been closer.

On one side was the Highway Reauthorization Act, an \$88 billion package to fund and run the nation's highway programs for another five years. On the other, charges from congressional leaders and President Reagan that the bill put too much money into so-called "demonstration projects" — projects funded over and above the usual allocation to the states. Nonetheless, Congress brushed aside charges of "pork barrel politics" and approved the bill.

The President vetoed it. The House voted to override the veto. But the Senate tried and came up one vote short of the necessary two-thirds vote.

It was a stand-off of historical proportions. Some called it the most important vote of Reagan's presidency.

The Senate quickly voted to reconsider and touched off intense lobbying on both sides to win the vote. The President personally lobbied on the Senate floor, the first such effort in memory. Thursday, April 2 on one last vote, the veto was overridden by a single vote margin, 67-33.

Only time will tell how the vote affects the presidency. For highways, however, passage of the bill means construction will proceed this summer. Another round of layoffs has been averted and thousands of construction workers will be putting highway tax dollars to work on our highways.



Hard work — lot's of it — led to passage of House Bill 136 and a renewed commitment to fixing Montana's worst roads. Bill Gosnell (left), Executive Staff Assistant, logged hundreds of hours in the State Capitol hallways, lobbying legislators and addressing one problem after another until the bill finally passed in February. A great deal of help came from Senator Joe Mazurek, Democrat — Helena (right), numerous other legislators and Sonny Lockrem of the Montana Contractor's Association. (please see related story, this page).



PLANNING — The Highway Commission, with Chairman Ilert Hellebust, set highway project priorities. . . .

PROMOTING — Governor Schwinden, along with Director Wicks and other highway spokesmen, promotes public support and continued funding for the selected projects. . . .



BUILDING — Lee Alt, Butte Traffic Engineer, and Gary Gilmore, Butte District Construction Supervisor, are key players in the highway construction program. . . .



CELEBRATING — George Schotte and Governor Schwinden cut the ribbon to open I-15 through “the canyon” between Elk Park and Basin last September. . . .

AND WE CONTINUE — The 1987 Legislature passed a 3¢ gas and diesel fuel tax increase that has restored the Reconstruction Trust Fund (RTF). The commitment to our construction program and better primary highways for Montana has been renewed.

MILEPOSTS

Service awards were presented recently to:

35 years: William Wertman.

30 years: Buddy Chapman; Lawrence Chezick; Floyd Grubb; John Mital; Leon Peterson; Albert Reather; Raymond Schaak; Duane Strohmayer; Burk Taylor.

25 years: Marlin Brackney; Raymond Buell; Richard Chrest; Kenneth Chrisinger; Lester Cloninger; Dale Devore; Don Gatlin; Delmar Lemons; Karl Norvell; Chris Sakelaris; Cleo Sandlin; Joe Schneidt; James Townsend; Russell Wrigg; Joseph Zimmerman.

20 years: Thomas Barnard; Herbert Bauer; Glen Bollinger; Sylvan Donegan; Rosemary Graveley; Vernon Jones; Joseph Kintli; Donald Lovely; Leroy Lucke; William Morton; Darold Reinhart; John Rooney; Charles Stephens.

15 years: George Cruickshank; Floyd Henderson; Jack Holstrom; Ben Jas; James Martin; Herbert Middlesworth; Robert Morgan; Mary Ellen Poole; Donald Quinlan; Evelyn Trudeau.

10 years: Kerry Brown; Richard Clark; James Cornell; Robert Finley; Bernard Hanley; Sherrie Hoffman; William Kasola; James Lawson; Richard Letang; Gary Montgomery; Roger Pearson; James Pesanti; Joseph Stradtman; Susan Tobin; Ron Verbanac; Richard Weaver; Richard Wiley.

5 years: Donald Bichler; Kenny Due; Edward Fallang; David Fetters; Robert Heyne; Willeen Miller; Mark Mullaney; Dale Newell; Lawrence Rooney; Randall Roth; Kenneth Varnado; Dwight Wade; Shirley Walker.



HEALING AFTER SURGERY

Director Gary Wicks will be sporting a cast when he returns to work. Wicks suffered multiple breaks to his lower leg and knee after being hit by another skier at the Great Divide (formerly Belmont) Ski Area near Helena March 29.

Wicks had bone graft surgery and was released from the hospital a few days later. His knee is healing impressively, but he remains uncomfortable and (some say) crabby.

Wicks was taking advantage of the spring snowfall on a rare break from the legislature when the accident occurred. An avid skier, he won in his age division in slalom events at Big Mountain and Bridger Ski Areas this past winter.

Meanwhile, Deputy Director John Prebil is at the ship's helm.



WELL, WELL, WELL! Skip those fatten-
ing lunches and **get fit!** An active group
meets three days each week in the Commis-
sion Room in Helena for an hour of upbeat
music and low impact aerobics (no sweat!).
The class started as a part of the state Well,
Well, Well Program and continues as a low-
cost way to work exercise into a busy day.
Stop by and see how much fun fitness can
be! Regulars in the class include: (top left)
Shirley McLaren, (right) **Carol Cook** and
Marilyn Lindsay and in lower picture (left
to right) front row: **Linda Wall**, **Mary Kay
Bennett**, instructor, **Mary Spaulding**; sec-
ond row: **Shirley Neuhardt**, **Ginger Pun-
tenney**, **Shirley McLaren**, and third row:
Thelma Willems and **Marilyn Lindsay**.

NTW

The annual NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION WEEK ROAD RACE will be held May 12 in Helena. Race organizers urge you to get out your running shoes and start training. There will be a one mile walk/run, a 5 km race, and a 10 km race again this year. The races start at 4:30 p.m.

Offices are encouraged to organize three-member teams and to challenge the other office teams. Participation has grown each year and the walk/run event is becoming one of the most popular.

This event has been plagued with inclement weather the last couple of years, but organizers are praying for good weather.

HOOVER, NOT HOOVER

Hoover Dam straddles the Colorado River, with one side anchored in Arizona, the other in Nevada. The dam was named not to honor Herbert Hoover the President, but Hoover the engineer, who, as Secretary of Commerce during the Coolidge Administration, negotiated the complex six-state agreement necessary to begin work on the dam.

TRANSFERS

Recent transfers included: Glendive: **Robert Castleberry**, GVW; **Garry Cotant**, Construction; **Ronald Durfey**, Construction; **Lesley Peterson**, Construction. Great Falls: **Richard Letang**, Construction. Helena: **John Boyle**, Planning and Statistics; **Stephen Herzog**, Materials; **James Jozovich**, Core Drill; **Stephen Kra-kau**, Materials; **Gary Larson**, Project Planning; **Mary Spaulding**, Right of Way Bureau; **Larry Williams**, Secondary Roads. Missoula: **Dolan Duffy**, Lolo GVW; **George Roat**, Construction; **Warren Unger**, Frenchtown GVW; **Heidi Walters**, GVW; **Timothy Webb**, Construction.

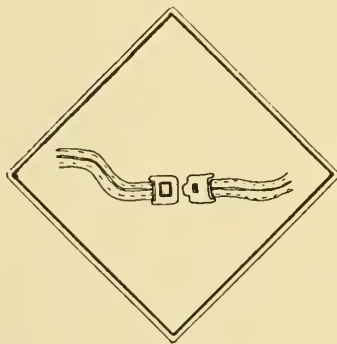


PARTY WITH THE BIG KIDS. One of Billings' most popular bands, "Savannah", is one attraction at the 26th Annual Bowling Tournament coming May 2 and 3 in Billings. In addition to the bowling events at the Fireside Lanes, you can hear Savannah at the dinner dance Saturday night at the Elks Club. Watch for more information in your office.

RETIREMENTS

Recently retiring with over 30 years with the Department were: **Howard D. Kelly**, Glendive, 37 years, 10 months; **Bernard Kelly**, Glendive, 32 years, 8 months; **George H. Tatchell**, Helena, 31 years, 2 months; and **Lester J. Sodja**, Helena, 31 years, 1 month.

Retirees with 20 to 30 years included: **Eduard Weber**, Helena, 29 years, 5 months; **Frank G. Miller**, Helena, 26 years, 11 months; **Robert M. Hanson**, Wolf Point, 26 years, 8 months; **Gerald Fagan**, Billings, 26 years, 2 months; and **Ole F. Olson**, Manhattan, 25 years, 9 months.



BUCKLE UP FOR SIGHT

West Germany now has a mandatory seatbelt law and results in at least one area are remarkable.

A survey by Munich University Hospital shows eye injuries are down an amazing 90%. Statistics in Munich have been kept for 20 years and one-tenth of traffic accidents involve eye injuries.

"We used to have 70 to 80 patients a year with injuries sustained from windshields. We now have only four or five," according to a spokesman.

NEWS FROM BUTTE

The balmy winter has been great for our maintenance budget and nervous drivers, but now everyone is concerned about trees, erosion, no water and few crops. I guess we can't win 'em all.

The Butte District received two awards recently. We were given a Certificate of Safety from the Safety and Training Bureau in Helena. Our district had the lowest equipment accident frequency rate from January through June, 1986, (2.5 accidents per 100,000 hours of work). The second award was granted to **Jack Brown** and his Dillon crew by the Montana Highway Users Federation in appreciation of their contribution to the safety and mobility of Montana's highway users. Congratulations to **Jack** and his crew for doing a good job!

James Latsch, retired maintenance employee, received the China War Memorial Medal from the government of the Republic of China for his part in a massive airlift over the Himalayas during World War II. Known as the "lost decoration," the medal commemorates service in China with the Chinese allies in defeat of the Japanese Empire. The decoration was authorized by the Chinese government at the end of World War II.

Several of our reduction-in-force (RIF) employees have gone back to work. **Steve Herzog**, **Ben Dean**, **Gary Larson**, and **Steve Krakau** are working in Helena; **Garry Cotant** and **Ron Durfey** are in Glendive; **Cliff Farrington** is in Billings; **Bill Patrick** works in Butte Maintenance; **George Stanisich** and **Joe Vigus** have their own business.

Bozeman held a retirement party March 13 for several people: **George Sitton**, **Floyd Strickler**, **Ole Olson**, **Swede Jensen**, and **Paul Aicher**. We wish all the retirees the very best.

—Karen Ham

NEW EMPLOYEES

Welcome to our newest employees! Billings: **Clifford Farrington**; **Patrick Metzger**. Glendive: **Cedric Coolahan**; **Kitty Forsness**; **Helen Osterman**; **John Seidl**; **James Slaska**; **Aaron Snyder**; **Thomas Stortz**. Great Falls: **Lori Butcher**. Helena: **Gail Cox**; **Pamela Bailey**; **Deborah Dils**; **Betty Foley**; **Elden Gittens**; **James Hackney**; **Dorie Heckathorn**; **Gordon McGaw**; **Kitty Mundt**; **Jim Pierce**; **Carolyn Rogers**; **Jane Wilson**; **Murdo Wilson**.



GLENDIVE PERSONNEL

We've had a lot of personnel changes in Glendive this winter. **Garry Cotant** and **Ron Durfey** have joined us from the Butte District as Engineer Tech III's. **Les Peterson** transferred in from the Construction Bureau in Helena to fill the newly created position of Assistant District Construction Supervisor. Welcome to all!

Three men with a combined total of 94 years of service recently retired from our Construction Division. **Bernie Kelly**, Field Project Manager, retired on January 30th with 32 years. **Pat Kelly**, Field Project Manager, and **Bob Hanson**, Wolf Point Engineer Technician III, retired on February 27th. **Pat** had 36 years of service and **Bob** had 26.

Lyle Knudson, Wolf Point Service/Combination man took a disability retirement in December after 13 years of service.

Our Personnel Specialist, **Dick Letang**, accepted the position of Great Falls Personnel Specialist. We will miss **Dick** and wish him the best of luck in his new home and job.

—Patty Zimmerman



1825 copies of this newsletter were produced at a cost of \$.08 each. Edited and Produced by Carolyn Chaussee and Dennis Unsworth, Information Unit. Phone 444-6200, Helena.

EARLY SPRING FOR BILLINGS

The Billings staff has been busy with several maintenance projects the last few weeks. Since January, sixty-seven lane miles of crack sealing have been completed near Hysham, Hardin, Custer, Lodge Grass and Lewistown. So far this season, we have used 50,000 lbs. of crack sealer.

Maintenance has also been working on erosion control along the Little Big Horn River between Lodge Grass and Wyola. Damaged and broken concrete guardrail posts laid in a herringbone pattern were used to hold down the filter fabric and slow the flow of water. This riprap project has been commended by the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks for the creative and environmentally acceptable use of waste concrete.

Lewistown's **Bud Johnson** is pioneering the state's extended lease dozer program. Dozers will be used for three months and then evaluated for possible permanent placement in the districts. During testing in the Lewistown area, replacement fill and riprap was placed around a large culvert and 400 feet of stream bank and riprap damaged in early winter storms were repaired. The dozers were really helpful with buttress reinforcement and fill replacement of a major slide area in Arrow Creek, too.

—Kim Lloyd



BEAT THE AFTERNOON BLAHS

It's three pm. But it feels like five. Your eyelids are heavy. Your mind is in a fog. What do you do? Probably, you reach for a cup of coffee. Or a candy bar. Or a soda. Or if you're a smoker, you light up. And by four you feel even worse than you did at three.

There's a reason for this. But there are also ways of getting around it. The best is a short, easy burst of exercise.

"But I'm already tired," you say? No, you're not. You're groggy. And there's a difference. If you were physically exhausted, you'd be sweating. What you **are** is half-asleep.

So, wake up — with a little exercise. Exercise gives the cells in your body a fresh supply of oxygen. And it's oxygen that you need to get cooking.

It may sound silly, but don't laugh until you've tried it. Because what a few minutes of activity will do is:

- force your body to nearly double its intake of oxygen and pump about twice as much blood through your veins;
- convert blood fats into blood sugar (the same stuff that candy bar tried to give you); and
- raise your metabolic rate (idling speed) by anywhere from 25 to 75 percent.

What all this adds up to is renewed energy. Because what you've done is call on your body's supply of reserve fuel (which it has plenty of) instead of adding fuel in the form of calories from outside.

So take a short walk. Or a quick dash out to look at your car. **What** you do doesn't matter, just so long as it gets you breathing. You'll be amazed at how much more productive you feel and how much faster five pm will roll around. — adapted from an article by Marie Hagen, R.N., in the *New Jersey Transporter*